

# UNSAFE CAMPING ORDINANCE

San Diego Municipal Code – Chapter 6, Article 3, Division 4

## OVERVIEW

The City of San Diego's Unsafe Camping Ordinance, approved in June 2023, established **new regulations prohibiting encampments on public property** and codifying how, when and where the City may abate or conduct enforcement related to violations of the regulations. **Enforcement of the ordinance will begin July 31, 2023.**

This document is meant to provide an overview of SDMC 63.0404. To read the full ordinance, please visit [sandiego.gov/city-clerk](https://sandiego.gov/city-clerk). If you are experiencing homelessness and would like to access shelter or services, please dial 2-1-1 or visit [211sandiego.org](https://211sandiego.org).



## IMPLEMENTATION

The City of San Diego is implementing the Unsafe Camping Ordinance in a way that is coordinated across all City departments.

**Outreach:** For weeks leading up to the start of enforcement, the City's non-law enforcement outreach teams worked to educate individuals living in encampments near schools and parks that the ordinance was passed and enforcement may begin soon.

**Scaled Approach:** Enforcement of the ordinance will be a scaled approach – starting first near schools and parks most impacted by encampments.

**Signage:** Per the ordinance, the City is installing signage in several locations citywide identified as being sensitive areas impacted by homeless encampments that may cause a risk to public health and safety near schools and parks. These locations will be addressed first, then additional locations throughout the city will be evaluated for signage.

## PROGRESSIVE ENFORCEMENT

The San Diego Police Department uses a **"progressive enforcement"** model to provide a consistent approach to enforcement. Officers are trained to always offer shelter to individuals prior to taking enforcement action and continue to provide offers for shelter and services at each subsequent interaction. Enforcement related to SDMC 63.0404 is outlined as follows. Other quality of life crimes may follow other enforcement procedures.

### SHELTER IS OFFERED AT EVERY POINT OF CONTACT



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**If shelter is available**, officers may enforce for violations of SDMC 63.0404 on any person camping on public property.

**Regardless of shelter availability**, officers may enforce violations in the following locations:

- Within two blocks of K-12 schools.
- Within two blocks of a shelter.
- Along trolley tracks and transportation hubs.
- In City parks, where a substantial public health and safety risk is determined.
- In any open space, waterway or banks of a waterway.

**Officers may enforce violations of other laws throughout the city related to homeless encampments, including when there is an immediate threat to public safety or the person is wanted in connection to another crime.**

## ABATEMENT PROCEDURE

The Unsafe Camping Ordinance standardized a citywide process for how the City's Environmental Services Department notices and addresses encampments and property found at encampments. The following steps outline how abatements will be carried out:

- 24 hours written notice posted at the encampment.
- Crews perform abatement of the encampment after the 24-hour notice period.
- Store any items of value\* and post a notice for how to retrieve items.
- Abate any debris or items remaining in the area.

Crews document the following:

- Photograph or video of the site before abatement.
- Items eligible for storage as outlined in the ordinance.
- Photograph or video of the cleanup process.
- Photograph or video the site after the abatement.

**\*Items eligible for storage include items with apparent utility such as identification and paperwork, medication, art, musical instruments and other items.**

